

## The Old Folks' Christmas Present

By DELYSIE FERREE CASS



HE old folks always had wanted a baby girl, even long after Henry had been born. But the years rolled by, their boy grew up big, handsome and strong, always cheerful and helpful about the farm, and they tried to resign themselves to the fact that their humble hopes never would be satisfied. Old John Barker never referred to them, but every once in a while his wife would catch herself brooding, misty-eyed, of the sure day when young Henry would marry and leave them alone on the big farm for which there was no other heir.

Her sole comfort in the thought was that he would undoubtedly marry one of the honest buxom daughters of neighboring farmers, who would be content with country life and not expect to take him too far away from them in their old age.

Then came the great war, and Henry went overseas with his regiment as did most of the other true



Accustomed to the Wicked Frivolities of Paris.

American boys. The old folks parted from him courageously—old John with a stern grip of calloused, toll-worn hands, and Ma Barker with tears steadfastly hidden behind her faded, loving eyes. He was their all and they gave him.

In the anxious months that followed the old folks' life held the same hard routine as ever on the farm. Old John drove to town oftener than usual—sometimes even twice a week—to see if any letters had come from mysterious, sinister places in France, and he and mother would pore over the few that did arrive in the proud knowledge that their Henry was a "good" boy and was doing his duty. They prayed each night that the Lord would keep him safe to come back to them and to keep him from temptation while away from their care.

Then one day, like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, came a terrible letter from France, which said: "I have found the sweetest little girl in all the world, and I'm bringing her home with me as a Christmas present to you. The regiment is now at Brest for embarkation and we'll surely be home for the holidays. . . . She is awfully pretty; black hair, big eyes and always wanting to be kissed. Her name is Angelique. . . . Of course she can't speak anything but French, but, dear mother and dad, I just know that you'll soon learn to love her as much as I do."

The old folks were stricken with consternation. Their Henry bringing home a French girl—a foreigner who wouldn't understand their simple, old-fashioned ways, and to whom they never could reconcile themselves! Such a one—accustomed to the wicked frivolities of Paris—never would fit in on the farm, however modest or "nice" she might be. More likely she would despise it, and them, and take their boy away to live in some big city—leave them lonely in the old age that was now upon them.

The old folks bowed their grayed heads beneath the blow, nearly heart broken, although they tried bravely to conceal their most harrowing dreads from each other.

"Maybe she won't expect to wear silk underwear all the time and will be willing to help you wipe the dishes evenings, mother," old John clumsily tried to console his wife as they sat alone in the farmhouse kitchen one night after chores were done. "And maybe, after all, she won't want to smoke cigarettes before people when she finds that American girls around here don't do that sort of thing."

Ma Barker shook her head sadly. "I'd do anything almost to make our boy happy, pa," she said, while the tears gathered in her faded eyes. "We must do our best not to let him notice how disappointed we are. Only I'm afraid she'll never be content here on the farm with us."

Ma Barker went about preparations for the big Christmas dinner with tearful premonitions, heavy hearted. She was nervous; wanted to sit down and cry, but felt she had to keep up before pa, for Henry's sake, if not-

ing else. She knew of old, exactly all the good things that her boy liked for the Christmas dinner—juicy black fruit cake, steaming plum pudding, odoriferous brown-roasted turkey, and but oh! she didn't know what to prepare for her—couldn't get any frog legs if she had wanted to. And the geography said that frog legs were a favorite French dainty.

Oh, whatever would the minister say? . . . yes, and Sally Howarth, too, when they heard about—about "Angelique!" Sally had been "sweet" on Henry, and poor old Ma Barker had hoped—

But, ah well! She mustn't let her dear boy know! He and his Angelique would be there tomorrow.

Christmas eve the old folks decorated the house with fir boughs, holly and strings of colored popcorn. They even trimmed a tree as they had done for Henry ever since he had been a little boy. Ma Barker thought, with a rising lump in her throat, that maybe the French girl would look on it all as silly; would curl her lip at their homely endeavors, but . . .

Christmas morning Jed, the hired man, drove off in the sleigh to meet their boy and his bride at the station in town. The odor of savory good things on the kitchen stove permeated the whole farmhouse, and the big open fire in the dining room crackled in comfortable contrast to the sparkling cold of the snow outside. Ma Barker bustled about, sadly setting the table with her best dishes. She caught old John stealthily coming up the basement stairs with a dusty demijohn.

"Why, Pa Barker!" she exclaimed. "What's that you've got there? I do believe it's that cider that fermented so as we couldn't use it!"

"Yes, 'tis," admitted old John pretty shamefacedly and shuffling his feet to hide his embarrassment. "But you see, I . . . I thought that maybe as Henry's girl is a French woman, she'd rather like hard cider, seeing as we haven't any light wines nor champagne for her to drink."

A few minutes later they heard the sleighbells jingling, the snort of the horses and the crunch of runners on the snow in front of the house. Instantly the old folks forgot the dread that had been overshadowing them since the letter came. Ma Barker, with trembling fingers undid her apron, smoothed her hair "so that Henry's girl would see her looking right," and rushed out of doors. Old John followed more decorously and stiffly, for his rheumatism had been troubling him more than ever lately, making work harder for him about the farm. Yes, he certainly was going to miss Henry's help when—

"My boy! my boy!" cried Ma as she threw herself into the extended arms of the sturdy young soldier in khaki as he leaped out of the sleigh behind the broadly-grinning Jed. They clung ecstatically together for a few minutes until old John forced them apart to pump his son's hand up and down and mumble something about the bright sun on the snow making his eyes water.

And then, after the first exuberant greetings were over with, Henry laughingly disengaged himself and cried at them:

"And now let me introduce Angelique to you, people. And I want you



Angelique Was a Four-Year-Old Baby Girl.

to feel that she's yours as much as mine. She'll love you, ma, as she does me."

From the depths of the hooded sleigh he bundled a diminutive figure, swaddled in furs and laprobes, with two big, sparkling round eyes beaming on them and red lips curved up into an adorable smile.

Angelique was a four-year-old baby girl whom he had adopted from a war-devastated village near the front!

"Her people were all killed by the Germans," Henry explained apologetically. "So I thought I'd bring her along instead of letting her be sent to some orphanage."

Ma Barker gave a choking sort of cry and caught the baby girl for which she had prayed so long to her relieved breast. As for old John, he swallowed hard, winked broadly at the grinning Jed beside the horse, and said:

"We've got some hard cider in the house, Jed. Better come in with me and have a nip before you put the horses up. Gosh, but come to think of it, Santa Claus' presents always are supposed to be surprises anyway, aren't they, Jed?"

## These Are Real Furs



Just now, with Christmas near, the shops are featuring fur garments and fur sets, knowing by experience that a certain percentage of people will be sure to purchase them as gifts. If you are among the number, be prepared to find prices far higher than you have ever known them, and the prospect of their being reduced is not cheerful. Garments made of the finest and rarest skins are prohibitive, except for the very rich, the price of all pelts and the price of labor having gone steadily higher for several seasons. The finest skins have reached the limit and are reported to have made a slight decline, while those that are more common have made an advance all along the line. Wages are not likely to decrease for sometime, and fur-bearing animals grow scarcer. In view of these things a good fur garment, or fur set may be considered a fairly safe investment, and nothing in Christmas gifts is more cherished.

In the group shown above, a coat, a cape and a scarf and muff set, appear in three of the most popular kinds of fur. The coat at the left, is made in Hudson seal with small muffer collar and full dolman sleeves. It is a graceful garment, warm without being heavy and may be classed as moderately priced even at some-

thing like five hundred dollars for the finest grade. The coat is a great favorite, and this one is cut on simple and gracious lines that promise well for a day in the future when it may be altered in style.

The glorious cape at the right of the group is made of dark mink skins and has a very large shawl collar. It is fringed at the bottom with long and short tails and there is no skin that can outshine it for beauty. Mink is a durable fur, and there is an advantage in having a cape of it; for capes are never out of style. So beautiful a garment need not concern itself as to whether it is more or less popular than other styles. But such a cape is more than likely to have its price mark written in three figures. It is expressed in terms of thousands probably, but these are real furs with real values.

The handsome fur set that holds the center of the picture is as rich and as durable as its companions. It is a short cape-scarf of very dark brown martin finished with tails and muffer collar, having a round muff matching it, as a life companion. This is a brilliant and very beautiful fur classed as "hard" by furriers on account of the way it resists wear and keeps its luster. It may be counted on to last for years.

## Pretty Neckpieces



Be not mistaken about neckwear or persuaded that the neck unadorned can hold its own against one that is clothed with pretty furbelows. As usual, the approaching holidays find neckwear departments in the stores all blossoming out with collars, fichas, ties, scarfs, gumpes, jabots and vestes, singly and in combinations and made of many different materials. Leading off are lace and net, following close are organdie, batiste, serim and crepe georgette. Then there are narrow silk or velvet ribbons in ties, and an army of knitted scarfs. And every article is a possible gift that will be a joy to its recipient. Just a few pieces are grouped together in the picture above.

The scarf shown at the top of the group, is knitted of light gray yarn and finished at the ends with a tied fringe of the yarn. Its special pride and glory lie in the sprays of roses crocheted of the same wool as the scarf and fastened to its ends.

Just below this scarf the collar and one cuff of a filet collar and cuff set show such a combination to be easily made. The filet is bought by the yard, measured into the lengths wanted and cut off. The ends of the collar and the cuffs are finished with a very narrow edging of filet and the straight edge sewed to a narrow band of fine batiste.

Organdie both plain and cross barred, is ornamented in several ways with pretty needlework and stitchery in collar and cuff sets or with fine embroidery or lace. A long collar of it to be worn with a surplice waist appears at the left of the picture. It is edged with three rows of narrow val lace. At the opposite side of the picture a collar of linen serim has eye-

lets and hemstitching done in light blue silk. A net gumpie worn under this collar, has a high collar finished with narrow beading.

There are a great many ties made of narrow velvet and silk ribbons and ornamented with beads like that shown in the picture. Beads and ribbons of all colors are used in these gay little neckpieces. There are also very popular vestee and organdie sets made of net and lace, organdie and lace or of these fabrics used alone. Wide silk ties for younger girls, and handsome jabots for matrons finish up displays that include something to suit everyone.

*Julia Bottomley*

### Evening Wraps.

The evening wrap is a thing apart. It bears some style relation to the day-time coat, but it has a much broader license in the matters of material, color and line. Rich satin, sumptuous velvet and magnificent brocades are the mediums of expression. And it is in the evening cloaks that one finds the subtle drapery hard to describe and even more difficult to imitate. The fact that the ensemble is one of striking simplicity will tempt the inexperienced to essay the making of a similar wrap.

### Bloused Back, Flat Front.

Fashions demand the bloused back and flat front.

### Simplicity in All Styles.

Simplicity is the keynote of all the new styles.

## WHO'S WHO in the WORLD

### J. F. KRAMER: HE ENFORCES PROHIBITION

John F. Kramer of Mansfield, O., has begun at Washington the discharge of his duties as prohibition commissioner in charge of the enforcement of the war-time prohibition and prohibition under the constitutional amendment. It is a \$7,500 job.

Commissioner Kramer was born on a farm in Richland county, Ohio, February 10, 1869. His early education was received in a county school, of which later he was the teacher. He entered the Ohio Northern university in 1889, and was graduated in 1892 with the degree of bachelor of arts. After seven years' service as superintendent of schools he entered the law college of the Ohio State university, from which he was graduated in 1902.

Commissioner Kramer took up the practice of his profession in Mansfield, O. In 1911 he was elected delegate to the fourth constitutional convention of the state. The following year he was elected a member of the state legislature, and during his second term was minority floor leader.

Mr. Kramer is married and has three children. He has served many years as treasurer of the Wittenberg synod of the Lutheran church.



### REINDEER IS THE MEAT OF THE FUTURE



1,000,000. The supply of reindeer will double every three years. In 20 years Alaska alone will be able to ship 5,000,000 carcasses a year.

"These can be delivered at Seattle for \$4 a head. The hide alone is now bringing better than that. And reindeer meat is sold on the market for 23 cents a pound. The average weight per carcass is 150 pounds."

Stefansson gained deserved fame by first showing that civilized man can travel in the arctic and live on the country.

Fresh meat yearly to the amount of 1,650,000,000 pounds at a production cost of 1 cent a pound—utilizing nothing but lands which at the present time are considered unproductive. That is one of the aims of Vilhjalmur Stefansson, arctic explorer.

"Reindeer constitute the future meat supply of the world—or a majority of it. Twelve years ago the reindeer industry was put on a commercial basis with 1,200 head. Today there are over 200,000. No females are being killed, only the surplus males—30,000 head this year."

"The reindeer and caribou are the same; the reindeer is domesticated and the caribou wild. The reindeer, which was domesticated before history began, can grow fat where cattle would starve to death."

"In Alaska there are 100,000 square miles of land suitable for grazing purposes. In northern Canada there are 1,000,000. The supply of reindeer will double every three years. In 20 years Alaska alone will be able to ship 5,000,000 carcasses a year."

### GOOD PEN SKETCH OF BERNARD BARUCH

Bernard Baruch of New York is much in the limelight in various ways. Here is a pen sketch of him at the recent industrial conference:

The leader of the group is Bernard Baruch, six feet two, probably, trim, keen, open face, gray eyed, candid as to countenance, quick moving, decisive, friendly, resourceful and as little satisfied with himself as a handsome man dare be. He is the newer type of American Jew. American life has pressed almost the last vestige of his blood from his mien. It is a strong blood, but this is a strong civilization we are making here, and in Baruch we see the two forces grappling with one another. And the western civilization is fairly well prevailing. But he has all the high vision that his blood entitles him to, all the capacity for honorable compromise, the ability to put himself in the other man's place. He is facile, gentle and has tremendous personal charm. He leads by charm rather than by force as David must have led of old. He is chairman of a committee of fifteen, a committee which has in its power the most important work of the conference. And in so far as leadership must direct the normal, must hold the average, he will do well.

He is not the intellectual equal of Gary, perhaps not even of Gompers, but he will not make the mistake of high-browling his leadership! It will be good, direct American leadership in committee.



### MARCH REPORTS ON U. S. ARMY NEEDS



A standing army of about 260,000 men, backed by a universal military training system to supply reserves, would meet the peace-time requirements of the United States, Gen. Peyton C. March, chief of staff, declares in his annual report.

General March founds his judgment on lessons of the world war. That proved conclusively, he says, that ability to be self-sustaining for an indefinite period, provided the army was adequately prepared, was the nation's greatest military asset.

So far as purely naval operations are concerned, he adds, the United States has nothing to fear from "any conceivable combination" of naval powers; but must be prepared to prevent seizure of bases by an enemy controlling the sea and intent on landing troops.

General March recommends fixing the strength of the regular army at five army corps, maintained at half strength in peace times. The proposals the department presented tentatively to congress during the special session called for 500,000 men and the statement of the chief of staff is taken to indicate that this will be scaled down to 260,000.

With a peace army of five corps backed up by a system of universal military training, "no foreign country could, in view of our performance in this war, disregard our rights," General March says.